

Cathrine Winnes & Benjamin Staern



Photo: Janan Li

Staern's colourful sonorities

Staern's synaesthesia contributes with a wealth of nuances to a variegated and extremely complicated soundscape, in which his tone painting contains an abundance of quarter-tones and recurrent special effects from the percussionists... Passages from Boulanger echo in the mighty work [Symphony No. 2] with the subtitle "Through Purgatory to Paradise"... It is lavish and grandiose; long, tranquil and ethereal sections are interrupted by powerful bursts of energy. The Royal Philharmonic is in its element and gets the maximum sound out of the instruments under the direction of Cathrine Winnes, who proves to be the perfect interpreter of Staern's music. *Svenska Dagbladet* 8.4.

Benjamin Staern: Jubilate, Songs of Dazzlingly White Love, Through Purgatory to Paradise – Symphony No. 2 (world premiere)

Royal Stockholm PO/Cathrine Winnes, sol. Anna Larsson, alto, 7.4.2022 Stockholm, Sweden (Stockholm Composer Weekend Festival)



Photo: Saara Vuorjoki

Jennah Vainio

Rapturous Beatbox Concerto

The concert ended in rapturous mood. The art music of the future may well be hidden in the beatbox concerto *Fujiko's Fairy Tale* by Jennah Vainio, a Finnish composer fast making a name for herself as far away as the USA: multi-genred, multicultural and physically palpable. The wizard soloist, Felix Zenger, left everyone gobsmacked!... beatbox artistry at its most magical. *Aamulehti* 10.4.

Jennah Vainio: Beatbox Concerto "Fujiko's Fairy Tale"

Tampere PO/Rebecca Tong, sol. Felix Zenger, 8.4.2022 Tampere Biennale, Finland

A journey through seriousness and beauty

What extraordinary beguiling music this is! ...I cannot fully capture the strange, entrancing quality of Eliasson's works in words: its essence defies description. I can only express my enthusiasm for the music – there is nothing quite like it out there. Performances are phenomenal and sound is excellent... Don't miss this!

American Record Guide May/June 2022

Eliasson continually offers sonorous surprises. It is brilliant, it is original, shocking and captivating. And the conclusion is: harmonious turbulence, varied unity. At the very end a solitary, soft signal sounds, a tattoo. But everything is not over. Here, too, what is said about jazz musicians who depart this life is true: they never die, they just fade out.

Opus #108 March 2022

Anders Eliasson: Symphonies Nos. 3 & 4, Concerto per trombone

CD: Gothenburg SO/Johannes Gustavsson, Royal Stockholm PO/Sakari Oramo, sol. Anders Paulsson, sopr. sax, Christian Lindberg, tbn (BIS-2368)

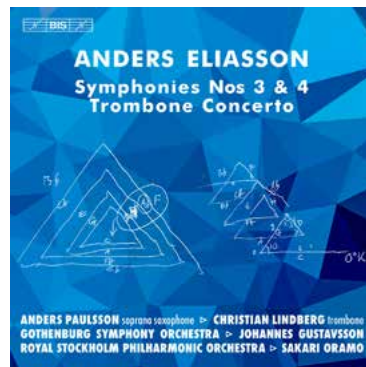




Photo: Dario Acosta

Emmanuel Ceysson

More great Aho concertos

The tranquil first movement of the Double Concerto conjured forth a timeless pastoral mood. ...In Vänskä's hands, it breathed with a throbbing, erratic, onward pulse. As its soloists it had the best possible duo, and they enjoyed working together in clear, poetic dialogue and brilliant, glittering solos.

Helsingin Sanomat 13.3.

Kalevi Aho: Concerto for Flute, Harp and Orchestra

World premiere: Helsinki PO/Osmo Vänskä, sol. Niamh McKenna, fl, Emmanuel Ceysson, hp, 11.3.2022 Helsinki, Finland

The premiere of the E-flat Clarinet Concerto was impressive – and aurally intoxicating... Aho has an exemplary command of orchestration and succeeds in constructing a mischievous, slightly loony musical adventure out of the Grimmelshausen novel that served as his inspiration. The one-movement work has numerous scenes: despondency, merriment, and a magnificent, brittle ending in which Aho uses a delightful instrumentation – a choir of recorders. *Savon Sanomat* 26.2.

Kalevi Aho: *Simplicius simplicissimus* (Concerto for E Flat Clarinet and Orchestra)

World premiere: Kuopio CO/ Leo McFall, sol. Fatima Boix Cantó, 24.2.2022 Kuopio, Finland

Timeless Schnelzer



Schnelzer's depiction of Burton [A Freak in Burbank] is a present-day commentary on the Sorcerer's Apprentice... The piano toccata Dance with Devil is a modern classic from the 21st century... In the lovely Apollonian Dances it is impossible not to think of Messiaen's long-spun meditations for strings, in contrast to caustic klezmer... The highlight and central feature of the album, however, is the violin concerto, Nocturnal Songs, with Ilya Gringolts as the impressive soloist. He can levitate

in exquisitely beautiful legatos in the treble register over the orchestra's pulsating bass, do a rustic dance in 5/4 time or lead a melancholy procession. *Opus #110* May 2022

The compositions of the Swedish composer Albert Schnelzer are characterized by an equally appealing and interesting style of writing... Although the works on the album have very different extra-musical backgrounds, they are united by a great intensity and energy with a strong rhythmic and motoric component.

Pizzicato 9.3.

Albert Schnelzer: *A Freak in Burbank, Dance with the Devil, Burn My Letters – Remembering Clara, Apollonian Dances, Frozen Landscape, Violin Concerto No. 2 – Nocturnal Songs*

CD: Västerås Sinfonietta/Simon Crawford Phillips, sol. Ilya Gringolts, vln, David Huang, pf, Jakob Koranyi, vlc, Henrik Måwe, pf, Cecilia Ziliacius, vln (BIS-2483 'A Freak in Burbank')

Wennäkoski premiere at Carnegie Hall

Throughout, Wennäkoski balances extended technique and expressive lyricism, sometimes layering the two, but bringing the instruments together for affecting silences. Then comes the bright, episodic finale, 'The Girl and the Scrapbook,' which takes flight with up-bow flourishes and a casual reference to Cyndi Lauper's 'Girls Just Want to Have Fun.' *New York Times* 22.4.

Lotta Wennäkoski: *Pige* (String Quartet)

World premiere: Danish String Quartet, 21.4.2022 New York, USA

Audience enchanted by powerful Harp Concerto

Sigla is in many ways a powerful, at times dramatic work... The orchestra roars at times but always in a perfectly calibrated balance with the soloist... It feels like Wennäkoski has lately found a new gear in her already rich style of composition. She moves in a no-man's land between tradition and modernity which she fills with glittering, colourful, captivatingly sensual, rhythmically lively and emotionally touching content. We can just hope that Sigla receives the international attention it deserves. *Hufvudstadsbladet* 19.5.

Lotta Wennäkoski: *Sigla* (Harp Concerto)

World premiere: Finnish RSO/Nicholas Collon, sol. Sivan Magen, 18.5.2022 Helsinki, Finland

Lotta Wennäkoski



Photo: Mikko Kauppinen

Inspiration and powerful expression

In his sixth string quartet, Pohjola handles folk songs in the motivic-thematic style of Beethoven, which makes the texture rich, ironically associative and often dynamically snappy... a distinctive work combining a respect for tradition, time travel and a strong modern expressive drive. The seventh quartet begins in flippant vein but then grows serious and romantic, but not without a flash of humour and a sense of adventure. The waltz-like rhythms give the music a dreamy swing.

Helsingin Sanomat 2.4.

Seppo Pohjola: *String Quartets Nos. 6 & 7*

World premiere: New Helsinki Quartet, 31.3.2022 Espoo, Finland

June–October 2022

MATTHEW WHITTALL**Waiting to Hear**Linda Suolahti, violin, Väinö Jalkanen, piano
8.6. Kittilä, Finland (*Silence Festival*)**Silence Speaks (Hiljaisuus puhuu)**Helsinki PO/Susanna Mälikki
14.10. Helsinki, Finland**MATS LARSSON GÖTHE****5 Pieces for Glass**Östgöta Symphonic Wind Ensemble, Jan-Åke Hermansson, Mikael Wittvång, natural trumpets, Crusell Quintet, Östgöta Brass Quintet, Östgötbandet
11.6. Rejmyre, Sweden**Ringraziamento – String Quintet**Uppsala Chamber Soloists
11.9. Uppsala Sweden**KALEVI AHO****Le Tombeau de J.K.**Pekka Kuusisto, violin
11.6. Naantali, Finland (*Naantali Music Festival*)**OLLI KORTEKANGAS****Partita concertante**Arto Noras, cello and ensemble
15.6. Naantali, Finland (*Naantali Music Festival*)**BENJAMIN STAERN****In paradisum: Song for the People of Ukraine**St. Jacob Chamber Choir/Gary Graden
16.6. Stockholm, Sweden**Sånger om bländvit kärlek (Songs of Dazzlingly White Love, version for chamber orchestra)**Västerås Sinfonietta/Fredrik Burstedt, sol. Anna Larsson, alto
29.9. Västerås, Sweden**JENNAH VAINIO****Queen Bee**Nicolas Indermühle, tuba
22.7. Lieksa, Finland (*Lieksa Brass Week*)**TIMO JUHANI KYLLÖNEN****Ilona irti (monologue opera)**Aurora Marthens, soprano, Trio Roozeman
18.8. Espoo, Finland (*Organ Night & Aria Festival*)**CECILIA DAMSTRÖM****Wastelands**Norrländsoperan SO/Ville Matvejeff
1.9. Umeå, Sweden**TOBIAS BROSTRÖM****Symphony No. 1 – Albedo**Gothenburg SO/Santtu-Matias Rouvali
7.10. Gothenburg, Sweden**MIKKO HEINIÖ****Ehtooveisut for mixed choir**Key Ensemble & Kryssostomos
8.10 & 9.10. Turku & Helsinki, Finland**SVEN-DAVID SANDSTRÖM****The Book of Life (opera)**Norrköping SO/Eric Ericson Chamber Choir/Tobias Ringborg, sol. Miriam Treichl, Jeremy Carpenter, Anna Larsson, Joel Annmö, Olle Persson etc.
14.10. Norrköping, Sweden**DANIEL NELSON****Chaplin Songs**Swedish Radio SO/Andrew Manze, sol. Camilla Tilling, soprano
21.10. Stockholm, Sweden**MATTHEW PETERSON****Choral work on texts by E. E. Cummings**Swedish Radio Choir/Kaspar Putnins
29.10. Stockholm, Sweden (*Sven-David Sandström Memorial Concert*)

Illustration by Emmi Nieminen

Delightful children's culture

There is never too much ambitious or well-crafted children's culture on offer, so Mäenpää's Insect Symphony is a valuable addition to the orchestral repertoire... The symphony sets out to explore nature and the miraculous world of little organisms... The music is melodic, as befits a piece for the whole family, and in many places calls to mind the speed and colour of film music. *Aamulehti* 19.3.

Roope Mäenpää: Insect Symphony (Hyönteissinfonia)

World premiere: Tampere PO/Roope Mäenpää, 17.3.2022 Tampere, Finland



Peter Mattei and Bengt-Åke Lundin

Darkness transformed into light

The material consisted of his own texts and musical settings where hopelessness is given a more distinctly vigorous musical language, inspired by Swedish folk and traditional song. Here the dissonances evoke a wintry desolateness, a harshness and chill reminiscent of the atmosphere in Schubert's "Winterreise"... Mattei fills the lofty ominous words with ample sound. He makes them ring out unsparingly against all the world's falsehoods, but he also expresses transcending inner stature. And then something remarkable can happen, as so often with Pettersson: darkness is transformed into light. *Dagens Nyheter* 22.4.

Allan Pettersson: Six Songs, 24 Barefoot Songs

CD: Peter Mattei, baritone, Bengt-Åke Lundin, pf (BIS-2584 'Complete Songs')

**Compelling, topical work by Antti Auvinen**

The music of Antti Auvinen is both compelling and topical... The 7-minute work is, in typical Auvinen manner, full of unexpected spatial phenomena and punchy rhythms that create a strong, physical sense of presence. A lot of things happen in Auvinen's music, but it is not just loud and fast, and in the end, the music is tempered in a really evocative manner. *Hufvudstadsbladet* 29.3.

Antti Auvinen: Stabat Tiger Mater (Helsinki Variations)

World premiere: Helsinki PO/Pekka Kuusisto, 25.3.2022 Helsinki, Finland



Antti Auvinen